Fourth Review Conference
of the Parties to the Treaty
on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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BASIC FACTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE REALIZATION OF THE PURPOSES OF THE TENTH PARAGRAPH OF THE PREAMBLE OF THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Background paper by the Secretariat

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Preparatory Committee for the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, at its first session (1 to 5 May 1989), invited the Secretary-General of the United Nations to prepare for the Committee's second session a background paper outlining the basic facts within the framework of the United Nations in connection with the realization of the purpose expressed by the Treaty's tenth preambular paragraph, namely, the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. At the request of the Committee, at its second session, the paper was revised and updated for the Committee's third session (23 April-2 May 1990). At that session, the Committee requested that, in the light of the comments made during its discussion, the background paper be updated and revised as necessary where appropriate for submission to the Conference. The present paper is submitted in response to that request. Keeping in mind the request made by the Preparatory Committee for a separate paper on the present status of negotiations of the Conference on Disarmament on the subject of a nuclear test ban (NPT/CONF.IV/9), the present paper mainly deals with the deliberations within the United Nations, primarily the General Assembly.

I. BACKGROUND

2. Throughout the nuclear era, and in particular since the advent of the thermonuclear weapon in the early 1950s, the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests has been, perhaps, the most prominent issue on the disarmament agenda. Undoubtedly, no other question in the field of disarmament has been the subject of so much international concern, discussion, study and negotiation as that of stopping nuclear-weapon tests. The complete cessation of such tests is a prime objective of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The question has been considered by the General Assembly of the United Nations every year since 1954. Since 1957, it has been a separate item on the agenda of the Assembly. The Assembly has adopted more than 60 resolutions calling for an end to nuclear-weapon testing - far more than on any other issue of disarmament.

3. A first step towards cessation of nuclear-weapon tests was the conclusion in 1963 of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, usually referred to as the partial test-ban Treaty. In the second preambular paragraph, the original parties to the Treaty, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America state that they seek to achieve "the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time" and express their determination to continue negotiations to that end. 1/

4. After the conclusion of the partial test-ban Treaty, efforts were directed towards achieving a comprehensive test ban. Despite persistent urging in the General Assembly and in the negotiating bodies, in particular the Committee on Disarmament (1979-1983) and the Conference on Disarmament (since 1984), and the determination expressed by the United Nations that the cessation of all nuclear

testing was a matter of the highest priority, no comprehensive test-ban agreement has yet been concluded and underground testing continues.

5. The tenth preambular paragraph of the non-proliferation Treaty reads as follows:

"Recalling the determination expressed by the Parties to the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water in its preamble to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and to continue negotiations to this end." 2/

6. Thus, there is a close relationship between that paragraph and the second preambular paragraph of the partial test-ban Treaty. In addition, article I of the partial test-ban Treaty states that the parties seek to achieve the conclusion of "a treaty resulting in the permanent banning of all nuclear test explosions".

7. Two bilateral treaties between the Soviet Union and the United States have placed additional limits on nuclear tests. In 1974 the Soviet Union and the United States signed a bilateral Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests, known as the threshold test-ban Treaty, and, in 1976, the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, known as the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty. The Treaties have not formally entered into force, but it is generally understood that both Powers are in fact adhering to their provisions. The former instrument limits permitted nuclear-weapon tests to a maximum yield of 150 kilotons, while the latter prohibits: (a) any individual nuclear explosion exceeding the 150 kiloton yield; (b) any group explosion with an aggregate yield exceeding 150 kilotons, unless the individual explosions can be identified and measured by agreed verification procedures; and (c) any group explosion with an aggregate yield exceeding 1,500 kilotons. During the Washington Summit Meeting from 30 May to 4 June 1990, the Soviet Union and the United States signed verification protocols for both Treaties which open the way for their ratification by the respective legislative bodies of the two countries. The verification methods agreed upon include hydrodynamic yield measurement, on-site inspection, seismic monitoring on the territory of the testing party, and national technical means. Under both Treaties, joint commissions will be used to discuss implementation and verification issues.

8. In 1977, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States began trilateral negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon test-ban treaty, in the course of which they agreed that nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes would be covered in a separate protocol. The last progress report on those negotiations was submitted to the Committee on Disarmament 3/ in 1980 and, later that year, to the Second Review Conference of the non-proliferation Treaty. Although the report indicated considerable progress in negotiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the negotiating parties expressed their determination to exert their best efforts and necessary will and persistence to bring the negotiations to an early and successful conclusion, negotiations on a trilateral basis have not been resumed.

9. In 1978, in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2,

paras. 45-51), the Assembly identified the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests as a most important initial measure in working towards the highest priority requirement of nuclear disarmament. Since then, growing attention has been given to the issue. Indeed, a comprehensive test ban has been regarded increasingly as the essential element in halting and reversing the nuclear-arms race.

10. Since the very early 1980s, the United States has emphasized the need for prior clarification of questions of verification and compliance and has regarded the negotiation of deep, verifiable reductions in existing nuclear arsenals as of greater priority than a test ban. The position of the United Kingdom has also reflected concern about questions of verification and the scope of a treaty, particularly the need to include nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes within the scope of the prohibition. The Soviet Union, for its part, has repeatedly confirmed its readiness for the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban and for negotiations to that end on both a multilateral and bilateral basis. In 1982, it submitted to the General Assembly a document entitled "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests". 4/

11. In 1983, Sweden submitted to the Committee on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating body, a "Draft treaty banning any nuclear-weapon test explosion in any environment". 5/

12. The Geneva multilateral negotiating body has long been involved with the issue of a test ban. Its Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, established in 1976 to address the seismic aspect of verification on a global network basis, continues to meet. Since its establishment, the Ad Hoc Group has submitted five reports to the multilateral negotiating body, the most recent one in 1989 (CD/903 and Corr.1, and appendices 1-7). In 1986, the Ad Hoc Group reported on the results of a large-scale technical test conducted by the Group itself. That test, known as the Group of Scientific Experts' Technical Test (GSETT1) is being followed by a new large-scale experiment (GSETT2), which is currently under way (see NPT/CONF.IV/9).

13. In 1982 and 1983, the multilateral negotiating body established a subsidiary body on a test ban with a limited mandate to examine verification and control questions, but not actually to negotiate a treaty. It made no tangible progress, however, because of disagreement over that mandate, and, for the same reason, since 1984 the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to agree to set up an ad hoc committee on that item. While the socialist States and the Group of 21 in the Conference have held the view that all questions relating to verification have been adequately studied and the actual negotiation of a treaty should be undertaken, in the opinion of most Western members consideration of those questions is far from exhausted and the question of scope - for instance, the treatment of peaceful nuclear explosions once a comprehensive test ban has been concluded - will also have to be examined and some understandings reached before negotiations can begin.

14. From 1984 until 1989, the Conference had before it draft mandates from each of the three major groups, but it was unable to agree on a compromise formulation (see NPT/CONF.IV/9). Consequently, no substantive negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty have taken place in the Conference since 1984.

15. In 1987 the Soviet Union, together with other socialist States, submitted for consideration by the Conference a qualitatively new version of "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests", 6/ which contained detailed proposals on the monitoring of such a treaty, including on-site inspections on a compulsory basis.

16. Debates in the General Assembly have reflected continuing disagreement regarding the way a test-ban objective might best be achieved. Most resolutions have called for action on the part of the Geneva negotiating body; others, since 1985, have envisaged the possibility of converting the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive instrument or, since 1986, of notifying all States of nuclear tests carried out. In 1986 the parties to the Six-Nation Initiative (Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania) circulated in the General Assembly a document on verification measures, the Mexico Declaration, 7/ in which they declared their readiness to co-operate with the USSR and the United States in monitoring a nuclear-test moratorium.

17. Nuclear-weapon testing has continued since the conclusion of the partial test-ban Treaty because certain States have felt that, in the existing circumstances, their security interests are promoted by developing new weapons, further refining existing ones, or, occasionally, confirming the effectiveness of their stocks. The Soviet Union attempted to break this pattern when, beginning on 6 August 1985, it unilaterally halted all its nuclear testing until 1 January 1986 and called upon the United States to do so as well. The Soviet moratorium, subsequently renewed four times, was maintained for a period totalling 18 months. The United States, however, together with some other countries, did not accept the idea of an unverified, unilateral, revocable moratorium. The United States in particular has continued to regard the agreed reduction of numbers of nuclear weapons on the basis of negotiated, binding treaties as a more urgent issue than a comprehensive test ban. However, it has also emphasized the need for more precise means of verifying and measuring limitations on permitted tests, with a view to reaching agreement on more stringent limitations.

18. From July 1986 to July 1987, USSR/United States expert meetings on nuclear-testing issues took place at Geneva. In November 1987, the two began actual negotiations on nuclear testing. They agreed to conduct these negotiations on a stage-by-stage basis, with the aim of reaching agreement, as a first step, on verification measures to make possible ratification of the 1974 and 1976 test limitation Treaties (see para. 7 above). Thereafter, they would proceed to negotiate further intermediate limitations on nuclear testing, leading ultimately to its complete cessation as part of an effective disarmament process.

19. As regards the deliberations of the three Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it should be mentioned that in the Final Declaration of the First Review Conference (NPT/CONF/35/I, annex I), in 1975, the participants recalled the determination expressed by the parties to seek to achieve discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. The participants also expressed the view that the conclusion of a treaty banning all nuclear-weapon tests was one of the most important measures to halt the nuclear-arms race.

20. At the Second Review Conference of the non-proliferation Treaty, in 1980, a thorough exchange of views on progress towards fulfilment of the Treaty's objectives was held (see NPT/CONF.II/22/II). The Review Conference was not able, however, to agree on a Final Declaration.

21. In the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference (NPT/CONF.III/64/I, annex I), in 1985, the parties, inter alia, stated:

> "The Conference ... recalled that in the Final Declaration of the First Review Conference, the parties expressed the view that the conclusion of a treaty banning all nuclear-weapon tests was one of the most important measures to halt the nuclear arms race and expressed the hope that the nuclear-weapon States party to the Treaty would take the lead in reaching an early solution of the technical and political difficulties of this issue." (sect. "Article VI and preambular paragraphs 8-12", A, para. 5)
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> "The Conference reaffirms the determination expressed in the preamble of the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, confirmed in Article I (b) of the said Treaty and reiterated in preambular paragraph 10 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time.
>
> "The Conference also recalls that in the Final Document of the First Review Conference, the Parties expressed the view that the conclusion of a Treaty banning all nuclear weapons tests was one of the most important measures to halt the nuclear arms race. The Conference stresses the important contribution that such a treaty would make toward strengthening and extending the international barriers against the proliferation of nuclear weapons; it further stresses that adherence to such a treaty by all States would contribute substantially to the full achievement of the non-proliferation objective.
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> "The Conference also took note of the appeals contained in five successive United Nations General Assembly resolutions since 1981 for a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty, and of similar calls made at this Conference. It also took note of the measure announced by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions from 6 August 1985 until 1 January 1986, which would continue beyond that date if the United States of America, for its part, refrained from carrying out nuclear explosions. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics suggested that this would provide an example for other nuclear-weapon States and would create favourable conditions for the conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the promotion of the fuller implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty." (Ibid., B, para. 5-7)

The Conference also held that the nuclear-weapon States should intensify their efforts to ensure the cessation of all nuclear tests. A compromise formula on the subject was included in the Final Declaration (Ibid., B, para. 12; see also annex II).

II. DEVELOPMENTS 1985-1988

22. In 1985 and 1986, the General Assembly adopted several resolutions (four in 1985 and five in 1986) on the question of the cessation of nuclear tests. None of them was unopposed, however, and a great number of explanations of vote reflected the fact that Member States continued to hold a variety of views on the specific problems pertaining to the question of the cessation of all nuclear tests. One of the four resolutions adopted in 1985 (resolution 40/80 B introduced by Mexico and also sponsored by Ecuador, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia) recommended a new approach to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. By it the General Assembly, noting that article II of the partial test-ban treaty provided a procedure for the consideration and eventual adoption of amendments to the Treaty by a conference of its parties, recommended that States parties to the Treaty carry out urgent consultations among themselves as to the advisability and most appropriate method of taking advantage of the provisions of its article II "for the conversion of the partial nuclear-test-ban treaty into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty". The General Assembly adopted the resolution by a recorded vote of 121 to 3, with 24 abstentions (see section IV).

23. In 1986, four of the resolutions introduced respectively by Mexico (both (a) and (d) below), Australia (b), and Hungary (c), dealt with the same, closely related, subjects as in the case of the resolutions adopted in 1985, namely: (a) multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, as a matter of the highest priority, on a treaty to achieve the early discontinuance of all nuclear-test explosions by all States for all time and, as a provisional measure, a moratorium on all nuclear-test explosions, which should include appropriate means of verification (resolution 41/46 A, adopted by a vote of 135 to 3, with 14 abstentions); (b) commencement by the Conference on Disarmament of practical work on a nuclear-test-ban treaty and appropriate verifiable interim measures (resolution 41/47, adopted by a vote of 137 to 1, with 15 abstentions); (c) negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on all aspects, including adequate measures of verification, of a treaty banning all test explosions of nuclear weapons by all States and, pending the conclusion of such a treaty, the joining by one super-Power in the moratorium on nuclear explosions declared unilaterally by the other super-Power, and extended several times by the latter (resolution 41/54, adopted by a vote of 123 to 3, with 26 abstentions); (d) the convening of a conference to consider amendments to the partial test-ban treaty that would convert it into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (resolution 41/46 B, adopted by a vote of 127 to 3, with 21 abstentions). The fifth resolution (resolution 41/59 N, introduced by Australia, adopted by a vote of 130 to 1, with 22 abstentions) concerned the notification of nuclear tests. The resolution called upon each of the States concerned to provide to the Secretary-General of the United Nations within one week of each nuclear explosion: the date and time of the explosion; the exact location of the explosion; the geological characteristics of the site of the explosion; and the estimated yield of the explosion.

24. In the course of the debates, China and France clarified their positions on testing, with China declaring, as it had already done in March, that it would no longer conduct atmospheric nuclear tests, and France (which had not conducted any

nuclear test in the atmosphere since 1974) explaining that as long as its security was dependent on nuclear deterrence and other States retained an excess nuclear capacity, it would not halt its underground nuclear tests. A number of States of the South Pacific region expressed strong opposition to French testing in their region, leading France to reply that independent experts had deemed that the French tests were conducted under unquestionable conditions of security and to claim that they were harmless to both the population and the environment. The countries of the South Pacific rejected those views noting that while their primary concern about testing in the South Pacific was that its purpose was to produce nuclear weapons, environmental considerations were also relevant. Thus, if the tests were safe - as the Government of France stated - they should be conducted in France.

25. The Soviet Union cited the fact that it had four times extended its moratorium on nuclear explosions and that for 14 months silence had reigned at Soviet nuclear-testing sites. It announced that in the course of the Reykjavik summit meeting, in October 1986, it had proposed immediate negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear explosions. In the course of those negotiations, it would be possible to consider specific issues, such as the question of thresholds and the yield and annual number of nuclear explosions. The main thing, however, was to ensure further progress towards a full-scale ban. The Soviet Union believed that in Reykjavik the two sides had come close to finding a formula. It then noted that the cessation of nuclear testing was also the priority area of multilateral disarmament efforts and the simplest, clearest, and most effective step which would be taken immediately to end the arms race. A Soviet-United States and, subsequently, a multilateral moratorium would also be a step towards concluding a treaty to prohibit nuclear-weapon tests. The Soviet Union was open to any ways and means of verifying the cessation of tests, including the establishment of a supranational verification network.

26. For its part, the United States recalled that it had put forward a plan for ratifying the two existing treaties on nuclear testing, the threshold test-ban treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty - which had been before the United States Senate and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for more than 10 years - that was contingent on achieving adequate verification. The United States had also put forward a plan for follow-up negotiations on further limitations on testing in association with reductions in nuclear weapons, an approach to which the Soviet Union had essentially agreed. The United States acknowledged that the Soviet Union had proposed steps on the nuclear-testing issue that resembled in most ways its own plan of action: verification, ratification of the two existing but unratified Treaties, build-down in the number or yield of nuclear tests on each side in association with reductions in the number of strategic forces and then, with the elimination of nuclear weapons, a comprehensive test ban. The United States further welcomed the submission of the report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts at the Conference on Disarmament 8/ and the Group's plans to continue its work by carrying out investigations by advanced methods.

27. Mexico introduced the Mexico Declaration adopted on 7 August 1986 by the heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania (see para. 16 above). The Declaration, it pointed out, was largely devoted to the subject of the cessation of all nuclear-test explosions and

the annex to the document was devoted entirely to it. The assistance offered by the six signatories would focus on verification of a moratorium in co-operation with the United States and the Soviet Union as a step towards the establishment of an appropriate verification system for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It would be based on monitoring existing test sites to ensure that they were not used for clandestine testing and on monitoring the territory of the United States and the Soviet Union outside the test sites to ensure that nuclear explosions did not occur and that natural seismic movements were not mistakenly interpreted as clandestine nuclear-test explosions.

28. On 11 December 1986, the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga) entered into force. The Treaty, inter alia, bans all nuclear tests in the region of the South Pacific as defined by the Treaty (see NPT/CONF.IV/16).

29. In his 1987 report on the work of the Organization, 9/ the Secretary-General of the United Nations pointed to the desirability of early agreement on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which for many years had been viewed in the United Nations as a measure having cardinal importance. He observed that testing directed at developing new weapons or perfecting those deployed would perpetuate competition and mistrust and reduce the value of agreements in force on the elimination of certain types of weapons.

30. At the forty-second regular session of the General Assembly, the United States recalled that during the September 1987 meeting between Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, the two Powers had agreed to begin full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear-testing issues before 1 December 1987. The first order of business in those negotiations would be to agree on verification measures leading to ratification of the 1974 threshold test-ban treaty and the 1976 peaceful nuclear explosions treaty. It went on to note that they had also agreed to proceed to negotiating further intermediate limitations on nuclear testing leading to the ultimate objective of the complete cessation of nuclear testing as part of an effective disarmament process. This process, among other things, would pursue, as the first priority, the goal of the reduction of nuclear weapons and, ultimately, their elimination.

31. In addition, the United States supported the establishment of a subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to consider issues related to a nuclear test-ban treaty, such as scope, verification and compliance, and the continuation of the work of the Conference's Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events.

32. Similarly, the Soviet Union held that an important outcome of the Foreign Ministers' meeting had been the agreement to begin, even before 1 December 1987, full scale, step-by-step talks with the ultimate purpose of totally banning nuclear tests. The first step, it stated, would be to achieve ratification of the 1974 and 1976 Treaties. The Soviet Union and the United States would then seek further interim limitations on nuclear testing, utilizing joint verification experiments in the process. At the same time, the Soviet Union stressed that it continued to deem it possible to reach agreement on an immediate cessation of all nuclear explosions, and noted that it had consistently sought full-fledged negotiations on the subject,

both in the Conference on Disarmament and with the United States, bilaterally, and that it could also agree to a trilateral approach.

33. The Soviet Union also announced its support of the General Assembly's appeal on the notification of nuclear tests (resolution 41/59 N), and later submitted to the Assembly data on the tests it had conducted since resuming them in February 1987. At that date, the Soviet Union had announced that it would no longer maintain its nuclear-test moratorium, while expressing its readiness to renew the moratorium on a bilateral basis at any time.

34. The non-aligned countries felt that bilateral negotiations should not be allowed to overshadow, but should rather boost, multilateral negotiations on a test ban in the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference should, therefore, establish an ad hoc committee with the objective of carrying out multilateral negotiations of a treaty on the complete cessation of nuclear-test explosions.

35. In 1987, four draft resolutions on a nuclear-test ban, as opposed to five in 1986, were adopted by the General Assembly. The socialist States dropped in 1987 the separate initiative they had traditionally put forward (see para. 23 (c) above). Once again, none of the resolutions adopted was unopposed.

36. At the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament, in 1988, a large number of States of all political and regional groupings stressed the priority and urgency of achieving a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, with many of the more pressing demands for an early and complete agreement coming from non-aligned and neutral non-nuclear-weapon States. 10/

37. While the bilateral negotiations on the subject between the two major nuclear Powers were widely regarded as promising, it was noted that their final and necessary objective was not time-bound. It was also noted that there were also other nuclear-weapon States in addition to the two major Powers, that the complete cessation of nuclear-weapon tests was the concern of all and, finally, that such a measure was necessary to the continued viability of the non-proliferation treaty. Accordingly, disappointment was expressed with regard to the very slow progress on the subject in the Conference on Disarmament and great stress was laid on the need for multilateral negotiations in that body to complement the bilateral efforts.

38. There was also strong support for the approach aimed at amending the multilateral partial test-ban treaty to make it cover underground test explosions as well as those in the other environments (see para. 23 (d) above). Some speakers felt, however, that in the end only a specific multilateral treaty arrived at on the basis of multilateral negotiations could guarantee the essential requirement of the cessation of all nuclear tests in all environments for all time.

39. The need for international verification was recognized by all who touched upon that aspect of the issue. In that regard, Sweden drew attention to the offer by the parties to the Six-Nation Initiative to assist in monitoring non-testing (see paras. 16 and 27 above); Japan proposed a conference under its joint auspices with the United Nations aimed at the establishment of a global seismological monitoring

system; and Australia and Norway supported such a system and explained their various contributions to its development.

40. The United States and the Soviet Union presented their respective positions and reported on their bilateral negotiations. The former reported that the two sides were making progress on a new protocol to the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty. The latter emphasized that the Conference on Disarmament could contribute substantively to the test-ban process, perhaps beginning with the consideration of a verification system. It was ready, on a reciprocal basis with the United States, to resume a moratorium on all testing, which could become a permanent agreement.

41. At the forty-third session of the General Assembly, support for an immediate or early multilateral, comprehensive test ban remained intense. The approach initiated in 1985 by Mexico whereby the parties to the partial test-ban treaty would convene a conference called for the purpose of converting the Treaty into a comprehensive instrument was endorsed not only by numerous non-aligned States, but also by some Eastern European ones, including the Soviet Union (see sect. IV). Two of the depositaries, the United Kingdom and the United States, reiterated their clear opposition to this approach, regarding it as, at best, unrealistic, but they stated that they would, none the less, continue to meet all of their obligations as depositaries under the Treaty. At the same time, both countries emphasized their continuing support for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament with a non-negotiating mandate, which would permit substantive examination of specific issues relating to a comprehensive test ban and complement the ongoing preparatory work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts.

42. Support for efforts to break the deadlock for the establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference was virtually universal, with differing points of view apparent mainly on the question whether such a body could conduct actual negotiations in the existing circumstances. In that regard, Western States as a whole continued to reject the view that negotiations could begin (see NPT/CONF.IV/9).

43. In general, the ongoing bilateral efforts were widely praised but not regarded as meeting the whole requirement. The joint Soviet Union/United States verification experiments being conducted as part of that process were viewed, first, as evidence of a marked attitudinal change in the relations between the two countries and, secondly, as demonstrating the often voiced belief that existing technical resources were adequate for readily detecting and identifying any nuclear test of military significance. As a corollary to that view, for the great majority of States it was not acceptable to regard the total banning of nuclear tests only as a long-term objective, or as one that could await perfect means of verification or large-scale nuclear disarmament. Those positions were linked to the equally prevalent opinion that a comprehensive ban would be the most effective means of heading off further technical developments and nuclear proliferation, both horizontal and vertical.

44. Some States did not concur with the majority positions on those matters or else they considered them impractical. They called attention to such points as: the value of the confidence-building aspect of the step-by-step approach; the respective existing positions of all five nuclear-weapon States; possible legal

obstacles converting the partial test-ban treaty into a comprehensive instrument; the value of the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts on their projected second technical test; and the potential of resumed substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament to complement, and thus facilitate, the bilateral negotiations.

45. Ultimately, in 1988 the General Assembly at its forty-third session adopted three resolutions on the subject, one less than in 1987, as the resolution on notification of nuclear tests (see paras. 23 and 35 above) was not resubmitted. Essentially, two of the three resolutions, 43/63 A (introduced by Mexico and adopted by a vote of 136 to 4, with 13 abstentions) and 43/64 (introduced by Australia and adopted by 146 to 2, with 6 abstentions) urged the Conference on Disarmament to initiate substantive work on all aspects of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty at the beginning of its 1989 session. Resolution 43/63 B (127 to 3, with 21 abstentions) introduced by Mexico essentially welcomed the submission to the three depositary Governments of the partial test-ban treaty of an amendment proposal for consideration at a conference of parties to the Treaty convened for the purpose of converting the existing Treaty into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

III. DEVELOPMENTS IN 1989

46. On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the launching of the Six-Nation Initiative, a Declaration 11/ was issued from the capitals of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden, and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Declaration stated that in the five years since May 1984, important changes had taken place, but much more remained to be done before one could be confident that the disarmament process was irreversibly under way. A comprehensive test-ban treaty to be adhered to by all States, the Declaration affirmed, was now more imperative than ever.

47. The Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, at its ministerial meeting held at Harare in May 1989, reaffirmed that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, which had been pursued for the past three decades, was a matter of the highest priority for the non-aligned countries, and called on the Conference on Disarmament to embark upon negotiations on such a ban and on nuclear disarmament. 12/ Subsequently, at the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade in September 1989, the Final Declaration welcomed the action taken by more than 40 States parties to the partial test-ban treaty, requesting the convening of an amendment conference in 1990 to convert that treaty into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which, they stated, was absolutely essential for the preservation of the non-proliferation régime embodied in the non-proliferation treaty. 13/

48. At the 1989 session of the Conference on Disarmament efforts intensified with a view to establishing a subsidiary body under item 1, i.e., "Nuclear-test ban", of the agenda. Progress on the question of an appropriate mandate was made in informal consultations among members of the Conference (see also NPT/CONF.IV/9).

. The General Assembly, at its forty-fourth session, in 1989, adopted three solutions on the cessation of nuclear tests, as it had done in 1988. One solution, 44/105 (introduced by Mexico and adopted by a vote of 136 to 3, with 13 stentions) entitled "Cessation of all nuclear-test explosions", appealed to ates members of the Conference on Disarmament to promote the establishment by the nference, at the beginning of the 1990 session, of an ad hoc committee with the jective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the complete ssation of nuclear-test explosions. Another resolution, 44/107 (145 to 2, with abstentions), entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty" l introduced by New Zealand, outlined a number of actions to be taken primarily the Conference on Disarmament so that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty ght be concluded at an early date. Finally, the General Assembly adopted solution 44/106 (127 to 2, with 22 abstentions), 14/ (see section IV below).

IV. AMENDMENT CONFERENCE FOR THE TREATY BANNING NUCLEAR-WEAPON TESTS IN THE ATMOSPHERE, IN OUTER SPACE AND UNDER WATER

. A proposal for the conversion of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in e Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water into a comprehensive clear-test-ban treaty was for the first time made by Mexico in 1985 (see para. 22 ove). According to that initiative, the States parties to the partial test-ban eaty would take advantage of the provision of its article II for amending the eaty. In 1988, the concept was formalized by the submission of identical letters gned by the representatives of Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and goslavia to the three depositary Governments, 15/ requesting them to circulate e proposal to all the parties to the Treaty, so that such a conference might be nvened following the request of one third of the parties, in accordance with ticle II of the Treaty.

. In 1989, the General Assembly, by resolution 44/106, inter alia, recommended convene the conference to consider amendments to the partial test-ban treaty at would convert it into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Specifically, e General Assembly recommended that a preparatory committee, open to all parties the partial test-ban treaty, should be established to make arrangements for the endment conference; that such preparatory committee should meet at United Nations adquarters from 29 May to 1 June 1990, followed by a one-week session of the nference from 4 to 8 June 1990 and a second substantive session from 7 to January 1991.

. In connection with the vote on the resolution, 16/ the United Kingdom recalled at on 2 November 1989 17/ it had announced that the three depositary Governments d decided to convene the Conference at Geneva on 8 January 1991 for a period of to two weeks and that notifications of the decision had been made to all parties the Treaty through diplomatic channels.

. At their meeting on 8 March 1990, the States Parties to the Treaty Banning clear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water decided to ld the Amendment Conference in New York from 7 to 18 January 1991, preceded by

Notes (continued)

16/ A/C.1/44/PV.41.

17/ A/C.1/44/PV.26.

18/ PTBT/CONF.1.